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THE
BELFAST MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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COMMUNICATIONS ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DUBLIN WEEK-
LY AND DAILY SCHOOLS.

THE part of Dublin in which these schools are situated, is inhabited principally by the manufacturing class of poor, who, employed during the week at their respective trades, have no opportunity of improvement, or of storing their minds with useful knowledge. In the year 1786, the Rev. Richard Powell, Curate of St. Catherine's parish, considering the lamentable situation of many children, who early apprenticed, on account of the poverty of their parents, were thus excluded from the manifold blessings of education, opened in conjunction with some other benevolent persons Sunday schools for both sexes, which were held, the male school in the Court-house of the Seneschal of the Earl of Meath, in the Liberty; and the female in the Parish School-house. These schools were not limited to St. Catherine's parish, but children from all parts of the city, were admitted, by the recommendation of a subscriber. Thus constituted, they answered the benevolent designs of the founder, until his removal from Dublin; but long prior thereto, many individuals who had contemplated their happy effects on those who were the objects of their care, now supported them; some of whom devoted most of their leisure time to their interest, and by

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their constant inspection, contributed, no doubt, to the respectable characters of many who have, in these schools alone, received the instruction, the importance of which they now experience.

Here we may take the liberty to express our sense of these institutions. When well and constantly attended to, they give (besides the instruction which they communicate, and the moral and virtuous principles which they endeavour to instil) many inducements to the poorer classes, to pursue and acquire an honest and industrious character. United to those above them in rank by the gratitude which flows from a remembrance of their kindness when young, and daily finding more the value of those lessons which they learnt at school, they well deserve the esteem and good opinion of their benefactors, and this will furnish an additional excitement to honest industry, and good character in those situations in which they may perhaps be placed by those who gave them the first rudiments of knowledge; and then, by an interchange of mutual good offices, these schools may form a cement between the higher and lower orders of society; teaching the former the true value of their rank and fortune, and making the latter reverence and love, rather than envy those whom Providence has blessed with a larger portion of this world's goods.

Strongly exemplifying the truth of this theory, these schools increase

ed so in number, that it was judged expedient to endeavour to erect a school-house, and, in the otherwise unfortunate year 1798, a subscription was put forward by those interested in their advancement, which was so warmly received by the public, that on the ninth of February, 1798, a meeting was held, when the following preamble and resolutions were adopted, and fifteen trustees appointed.

"The consideration of the state of the children of the poor in this city, and their much neglected situation respecting necessary instruction, having occupied the attention of a few individuals, and they having communicated their sentiments to others on this subject, they were of opinion, that if a suitably adapted house could be erected, capable of containing fifteen hundred children, for the purpose of holding schools therein, considerable benefit might be derived; and it being judged suitable that these ideas should be communicated to a larger number, and subscriptions solicited for the purpose intended. This has accordingly been done, and by a list now exhibited, it appears that £1029 8 3 has been subscribed; and the subscribers having been individually summoned to meet, for the purpose of agreeing upon a mode of carrying the before-mentioned intention into effect:—accordingly a considerable number of the subscribers being now present at the Sick Poor Institution House, Meath-street, the 9th of February, 1798,

George Maquay in the chair,

"Resolved, in order the better to carry the said design into execution, that fifteen trustees be now appointed by ballot, to whom the entire management of procuring the ground for the purpose, and erecting the house thereon, shall be entrusted, and when erected, that the absolute dominion thereof be invested in

them in trust, for the purpose of permitting schools to be held therein, *in which no distinction shall be made on account of religious profession, either in managers, instructors, or scholars."*

After the appointment of the trustees, a sufficiency of subscriptions came in to enable them to erect the building in which the schools are now held, and which is capable of accommodating from one thousand to fifteen hundred children conveniently. For some years after its erection, the schools were well attended to, and conducted satisfactorily, but several of the most active supporters, having, from their different circumstances in life, very much declined their superintendence, the funds became insufficient for their support, and they languished until in the beginning of the year 1808, when, by the exertions of some of their early supporters, a regular committee of twenty-one, was formed from among the subscribers, for the purpose of renovating the Sunday schools, and establishing daily schools.

Soon after the formation of the committee, they turned their attention to the best mode of instruction to be adopted in the proposed daily schools, and, after due deliberation, they were of opinion that the plan followed in the school established by Joseph Lancaster was the best; combining rapid improvement with œconomy; accordingly, a young man was got over from his school in London, who organized the daily schools, and they have since been conducted on his plan (with some small deviations) to very great advantage.

At the time the daily schools were opened, it was judged adviseable to insist upon a small weekly payment from the scholars in order to increase the funds, and give the children a greater interest in them; accordingly it was agreed that those who at-

tended the daily school, should pay twopence, and the Sunday school one penny per week. This has been very productive, and has enabled the governors to extend their views for their advancement.

The entire of the schools, Sunday and Daily, are under the care of an officer called the Superintendent, whose duty it is to admit the scholars, dismiss the bad attenders, and generally to take care that all the orders of the committee are carried into execution. It is but proper to acknowledge that the schools have reaped great advantage from his exertions.

The Lancasterian plan has been introduced into the Sunday schools in the spelling and reading classes, but it has not been thought advisable to introduce it into those more advanced.*

The male daily school is, besides the Superintendent, under the care of two masters; and the female school, two mistresses, one to teach spelling, reading, writing and cyphering, and the other, sewing† and knit-

ting; they are besides taught to sweep and clean the school-house, and such other domestic employment as is necessary. As an encouragement to attention and industry, their savings in sewing and knitting is kept an account of, and a certain sum is allotted to each girl employed in cleaning the house, &c. the whole of which is laid out in articles of useful clothing.

The principal deviation from the Lancasterian plan is in teaching arithmetic, the arrangement of which is altered in some degree; and in his system of emulation and rewards,‡ which, except very judiciously administered, is likely to be injurious to young minds.

And now we would wish to add to

tailed of cutting out articles of clothing without expense or loss of materials; and the method by which 500 girls can be taught to sew with very little trouble. In all schools for poor girls, particular attention should be paid to teach an economical method of making and mending articles of clothing, as this important branch of instruction may be of material advantage to them in future life.

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* While considerable merit is acknowledged to be due to Joseph Lancaster for his plan of education, which is very excellent in many respects, it must be observed by all who have the management of schools on the Lancasterian plan, that the system is too superficial. It gives the children the appearance of knowledge without the reality, and it has been found necessary in some instances to procure common school-books to prevent the children from being superficial. Although Lancaster's system of Arithmetic is in some respects excellent, yet the mere mechanical knowledge of the four first rules is not sufficient. The reading lessons are too difficult for learners; and the spelling lessons are very defective. Some spelling and reading lessons have been published in Dublin, which are much better adapted to the capacities of children.

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† It is recommended to ladies who have the management of poor schools for females, to peruse a book lately published by Joseph Lancaster, in which a plan is de-

‡ Instead of giving pictures, tops, balls, &c. for premiums, useful articles of clothing have been distributed with advantage in some schools, to children who have distinguished themselves by a proficiency in learning. It cannot be expected that the poor can have their children as neat and clean as could be wished: some may be prevented by carelessness, but many by poverty. By means of giving the children useful articles of clothing, as premiums, more attention can be paid to cleanliness, than if the premiums were mere useless toys. Books are not well calculated for premiums, as the poor seldom prize books which they get gratuitously. They are either given to a child instead of a toy, or their fragments employed to light a pipe. It is much better to lend books, as care is then taken to keep them clean, lest they may be prohibited from getting books in future.

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the numerous authorities which have established the policy and benefit of such schools, the testimony which so many years' experience enables us to give, and to express our firm conviction that were they universally established throughout this country, we should find the lower classes increasing in respectability, and advancing rapidly in all the arts of civilized society; we should find that knowledge which alone exalteth a people, diffusing itself far and wide throughout our land, producing as its never failing effects the peaceful fruits of order, regularity, and decency, while honest industry, and domestic comfort would combine to bless the poor man's dwelling, producing that contentment and happiness which truly enrich and adorn a country. We would also hold out the history of this one establishment, as an encouragement to persevering and vigorous exertion; as since its foundation, at various times, discouraging circumstances have contributed to raise fears and doubts in the minds of the governors, as to their ability to carry it on; but supported on the firm basis of public utility, and fostered by the guidance and guardian care of Providence, this establishment has flourished to this hour, manifesting its happy effects in giving knowledge to the ignorant, and training up the youth in the way in which they should go. There is perhaps no circumstance which has been the means of giving to this institution more permanency and popularity than the fundamental principles on which the school has been conducted.

Considering the manner in which this country is unhappily divided, with respect to religious opinions, the governors of these schools have laid it down as an invariable rule, that the Scriptures should be the only religious book introduced into

them, and that no catechism or book of controversy should be allowed. The governors do not inquire the religion of the child on its admission, and while they endeavour that the contending sects should conciliate one another, they trust that the pure principles which they endeavour to inculcate, will bend the minds of the scholars to piety and virtue. Many instances have occurred where this plan has introduced unanimity and concord, between persons belonging to parties the most hostile to each other, while all persuasions have concurred in a feeling of confidence towards the institution, and a wish for its prosperity.

Such have been a few of the many benefits which have resulted to society from this establishment; many more, we are certain, could be mentioned, were our observations more extended.

Annexed is a copy of the general rules by which the schools are conducted.

General Rules for conducting the Weekly and Daily Schools, held in the Dublin Free School-House, School-street.

1.—The schools are supported by annual subscriptions and donations; also by a small weekly payment from each scholar.

2.—All persons subscribing ten guineas at one time, shall be governors for life; and those subscribing one guinea annually, governor for the year.

3.—The governors shall annually appoint a treasurer, and a committee of twenty-one subscribers, who shall have the particular care of the school, the appointment of the Superintendent, teachers, and servants, and shall be accountable to the general meeting of governors. The committee shall meet once a month,

and adjourn as they shall see occasion; three to be a quorum. Two members may at any time call a meeting of the committee. The committee may appoint visitors, and make such bye rules as they think necessary, not being inconsistent with the general rules.

4.—Although the weekly and daily schools shall be under the management of the same committee, and shall have one common fund, yet the registry of the scholars, and the account of expenditure shall be kept separate.

5.—A person shall be appointed by the committee who shall keep the accounts, collect the subscriptions, register the admission of scholars, and have a general superintendence of both the schools.

6.—The Superintendent shall enter daily the number of scholars in each class, and the numbers present as received from the teachers; he shall also see that the teachers, &c. attend at the appointed hours; and if any irregularity appear, enter it, with the return, and such other remarks as he may think necessary, which shall be laid before the committee.

7.—The Superintendent may suspend a scholar for improper conduct, reporting the case to the committee at their next meeting, and if the committee determine on his dismissal, he shall not be re-admitted but by their order.

8.—The Superintendent shall enter in a book provided for the purpose, the names of the scholars, their place of abode, by whom recommended, what books they received, when they leave the school, and other particulars respecting them.

9.—The Treasurer is not to pay any money on account of the institution, without an order from the committee, signed by three members, by direction thereof; his ac-

count to be examined once in the year, at least, at a general meeting of the governors, to be summoned for the purpose.

10.—A general meeting of the governors shall be held annually, which shall examine the treasurer's accounts, inspect the proceedings of the committee, inquire into the state of the schools, and publish a report of the state of the funds, with such other information as may appear proper to communicate to the subscribers.

11.—The committee may call general meetings of governors when occasion requires. General meetings may be called at the requisition of five governors, directed to the Superintendent. All general meetings are to be convened by public advertisement, in one or more newspapers, or by individual summons.

12.—No alteration in the general rules, nor new ones to be adopted unless with the approbation of two general meetings, to be held at least one month asunder, and the notice for the latter must express the purpose of the meeting.

Weekly Schools.

1.—None to be admitted scholars unless recommended by a subscriber, who shall be accountable for the books; each scholar to pay one penny per week, and to be provided with books, paper, slates, pens and ink, at the expense of the institution.

2.—The scholars are to be taught spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic; to be divided into classes, according to their proficiency in learning, and removed from one class to another, as may appear suitable. They will be permitted to take home their spelling and reading books, but not their copies or slates; the latter shall be taken care of by the teachers. The cyphering

teachers to have a sufficient number of slates and Arithmetics under their care, for which they are to be accountable. The Scriptures are to be read in the schools, but neither catechisms, nor books of religious controversy to be admitted.

3.—Each class to be under the care of one or more teachers, who are to go to the places of abode of such of their scholars as absent themselves, inquire the cause thereof, and report to the Superintendent as they see occasion; and if they continue to be absent four weeks, without a sufficient cause being assigned, an order is to be given by the Superintendent for the books such scholars have received in the school; they are then considered as dismissed, but if the books cannot be obtained, the order to be returned, and one given on the recommender of each absentee, for their amount. Scholars so dismissed shall not be re-admitted, unless recommended by two subscribers, and if again dismissed, not re-admitted but by an order of the committee.

4.—Monitors and mistresses to be chosen quarterly, to assist the teachers, from amongst those scholars who are judged best qualified.*

5.—The masters to be paid two shillings and six pence; the mistresses two shillings, and monitors and mistresses one shilling each per week.

6.—The school to open at eight o'clock in the morning, and continue

till eleven; and to open at four in the afternoon, and continue till eight.

Daily Schools.

1.—None to be admitted scholars, unless recommended by a governor, who shall be accountable for the books, and each scholar to pay two-pence per week. He shall be provided with books, paper, slates, pens and ink, at the expense of the institution.

2.—Two masters to be appointed to the male-school, at salaries of forty pounds per annum; and two mistresses to the female school, one to have the general charge of their education, at a salary of thirty-five pounds, and the other to teach sewing, knitting, &c. at a salary of thirty pounds per annum.

3.—The boys to be taught spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the girls the same, together with sewing and knitting.

4.—The scholars to be permitted to take home their spelling and reading books, but not their copies or slates.—The Scriptures to be read in the schools, but no catechism, or book of religious controversy, to be admitted.

5.—The school to be open from 1st of March to 30th September inclusive, from nine o'clock in the morning to one, and from three in the afternoon to six; and from first of October to last of February, from 9 o'clock in the morning till 3 in the afternoon.

* Great care should be taken in having a constant oversight of the monitors. The possession of power is frequently dangerous to the young and unreflecting mind; in some instances monitors have been induced to favour some children in their class more than others, and it requires persons who have the management of schools to be particularly attentive to the conduct of the monitors.

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The following rules for the conduct of Monitors, are selected from the particular laws of the school, which are read to the scholars every week, to impress them on their memory. The rules, if properly attended to, contain excellent instruction.

Question. WHAT are the particular rules for monitors?

Answer. They are these following : At a proper time in the morning, wash your hands and face clean, comb your hair, brush your clothes, and then make haste to school. Come into school quietly and orderly. All monitors, while in school, must be very silent, and obedient to the school laws. Take great care of your classes, and never allow them to be disorderly. The monitors belonging to this school shall keep their hats slung, and they shall order their classes to do so too. All classes found otherwise, shall be fined, and the fine shall fall on the monitor.

The monitors of classes shall give strict orders not to allow any boy to make a noise while reading, only the boy whose turn it is to read. Never take bribes from the children under your care; never quarrel with any person; never tell lies; never swear, and never use bad words.

Q. Why are these rules made for us?

A. That, by observing them, we may know how to keep our classes always in good order.

Q. What is the 7th particular rule against?

A. It is against talking, and is as follows : You shall send out all the talking boys of your classes ; and any monitor who does not do so, will be punished in the front of his own class. Never allow your boys to be talking, idling, playing, dirty, or careless in school, without giving them their proper marks, and sending them out. You shall take care of the slates, marks, &c. belonging to your classes, and if you see a monitor careless or idle in his class, you shall report his name to the monitor-general. You must be very careful to look after the absentees of your class, and make the report of them. When you give any lawful commands, (or orders),

to your classes, see that they are obeyed, and if they are not, you shall report the names of those who do not obey them. When visitors are in the school, do not stare at them, but keep your classes quiet. You shall receive all the orders of the school with cheerfulness, and obey them to the best of your power ; and you shall be obedient to the lawful commands given by the monitor-general.

No monitor shall tell a lie, nor swear, nor make use of bad words, neither shall he listen to another monitor doing so, without reporting him to the monitor-general.

Behave yourselves always in a gentle, obliging manner to your school-fellows ; never strive to provoke one another, nor contend about trifles, but always make use of kind expressions one to another.

Q. Is it not an honour to a monitor to do his duty?

A. It is, and he shall be rewarded for doing so.

Never let your own voice be heard in the street, for fear that the boys of your classes should follow your bad example. Be not forward to speak of any thing that passes in school, nor to mock, nor make game of any of your school-fellows for being corrected, it is unkind, and may happen to be your own case.

Q. If monitors do not mind their duty, what will be done to them?

A. They will be punished for disobedience.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

LAWS OF THE DUBLIN INSTITUTION.

SECTION I.

General Laws.

1. **T**HIS society shall be called the DUBLIN INSTITUTION, for